

RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS AND BIAS

(Use responses alone or in combination)

✓ RESTATE OR PARAPHRASE.

"I think I heard you saying _____ (paraphrase their comments). Is that correct?"

✓ ASK FOR CLARIFICATION OR MORE INFORMATION.

"Could you say more about what you mean by that?"

"How have you come to think that?"

✓ ACKNOWLEDGE THE FEELINGS BEHIND THE STATEMENT. Express empathy and compassion.

"It sounds like you're really frustrated/nervous/angry..."

"I can understand that you're upset when you feel disrespected."

✓ SEPARATE INTENT FROM IMPACT.

"I know you didn't realize this, but when you _____ (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because _____. Instead you could _____ (different language or behavior)."

✓ SHARE YOUR OWN PROCESS.

"I noticed that you _____ (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that too, but then I learned _____."

✓ EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS.

"When you _____ (comment/behavior), I felt _____ (feeling) and I would like you to _____."

✓ CHALLENGE THE STEREOTYPE. Give information, share your own experience and/or offer alternative perspectives.

"Actually, in my experience _____."

"I think that's a stereotype. I've learned that _____."

"Another way to look at it is _____."

✓ APPEAL TO VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.

"I know you really care about _____. Acting in this way really undermines those intentions."

- ✓ **PROMOTE EMPATHY.** Ask how they would feel if someone said something like that about their group, or their friend/partner/child.

“I know you don’t like the stereotypes about _____ (their group), how do you think he feels when he hears those things about his group?”

“How would you feel if someone said that about/did that to your sister or girlfriend?”

- ✓ **TELL THEM THEY’RE TOO SMART OR TOO GOOD TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT.**

“Come on. You’re too smart to say something so ignorant/offensive.”

- ✓ **PRETEND YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND.** As people try to explain their comments, they often realize how silly they sound.

“I don’t get it.....”

“Why is that funny?”

- ✓ **USE HUMOR.** Exaggerate comment, use gentle sarcasm.

“She plays like a girl?” You mean she plays like Serena Williams?” Or Mia Hamm?

- ✓ **POINT OUT WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON WITH THE OTHER PERSON.**

“I’m tired of hearing your Muslim jokes. Do you know he’s also studying _____ and likes to _____? You may want to talk with him about that. You actually have a lot in common.”

- ✓ **W.I.I.F.T. (What’s in it for them).** Explain why diversity or that individual/group can be helpful/valuable.

“I know you’re not comfortable with _____ but they can help us reach out to/better serve other groups on campus/in the community.”

“In the real world, we are going to have to work with all sorts of people, so might as well learn how to do it here.”

- ✓ **REMIND THEM OF THE RULES OR POLICIES.**

“That behavior is against our code of conduct and could really get you in trouble.”

Adapted from: Goodman, D. (2011). *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups*. New York: Routledge.